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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to describe the development and operation of a unique cataloging and access system used in the Curricular-Career Information Service (CCIS) at Florida State University. Although this system was designed to serve a University population it could easily be adapted for use in secondary schools or other agencies having career centers. Following a brief overview of CCIS, a detailed description of the cataloging and cross-referencing system is presented. The concluding section reviews implications for practitioners wanting to develop similar systems at their institutions. (Author)

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A Delivery System for Easy Access to Career Information

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This paper briefly describes the development and operation of a unique access and cross-referencing system for career information materials used in the Curricular-Career Information Service at Florida State University.

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A Delivery System for Easy Access to Career Information

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As previously dormant career information libraries are being refurbushed, demands for better career planning services increase, and the tide of career information materials moves toward the guidance office, many counselors and librarians are shaking their heads as they contemplate the future. It is virtually impossible for one person to recall the location of all the bits of information on a particular occupation, e.g. briefs, book chapters, audio-tapes, resource people. When related occupations, levels within the field, and training or entry requirements are added to the picture, the need for a system for filing and storing career information within a library or guidance office becomes readily apparent.

This problem has been recognized by many but adequately dealt with by few. Kirk and Michels (1964) noted that"...occupational libraries have often suffered from such haphazard or complex filing systems that neither clients nor counselors could readily locate pertinent materials" (p.39). Circle, Clemens, Kroll, and Overholt (1968) wrote of the classification and storage problem with career information:

> This element is usually the "Achilles heel" of any career information service. A system is only as effective as are the procedures for classifying, filing, and retrieving materials.

> Once a library is underway, materials come in so rapidly that the staff is undated unless they have a well-developed plan for accessioning materials (p.35)

The purpose of this paper is to describe the development and operation of a unique cataloging and access system used in the Curricular-Career Information Service (CCIS) at Florida State University. Although this system was designed to serve a University population it could easily be adapted for use in secondary schools or other agencies having career centers.

Following a brief overview of CCIS, a detailed description of the cataloging and cross-referencing system is presented. The concluding section reviews implications for practitioners wanting to develop similiar systems at their institutions.

CCIS Overview

The problems facing the career information service on many campuses involve a small staff, thousands of students wanting help, and a university offering hundreds of academic programs for training in myriads of careers. CCIS, a multi-media based, outreach, self-help oriented, preprofessional staffed, career guidance information resource center, is the vehicle Florida State University has chosen to solve the problem. The program is four years old and was pilot tested in a freshmen coeducational residence hall before being expanded and moved to its present locations (Reardon & Minor, 1975).

CCIS offers students an extensive library of information about occupations, e.g., what it's like to be a social worker, occupational outlook, salary range and necessary training, all of which is presented via several media. CCIS also has detailed information on the FSU curriculum as well as programs offered by other postsecondary institutions. A self-help program in career decision-making is available to students in the form of ten instructional modules which utilize slidetape presentations, printed materials, audio - and video-tapes.

There are two CCIS centers currently operating on the FSU campus. One is located in the student services building to take referrals from other student service agencies. The other is located in the Student Union to serve a large volume of self-referred, drop-in traffic.

A total of twelve staff members typically work in CCIS. These include a half-time director, a full-time coordinator/career development specialist, a full-time secretary, a third-time library assistant, a half-time librarian, five half-time graduate assistant proctors, and two work study students. Since only the first three of these people might be considered permanent staff, it should be understood that program activities and services can vary considerably from one quarter to another.

Development of the Library System

In the process of duplicating career information materials for establishment of the Union center, help was sought from FSU's School of Library Science, One of the faculty members "adopted" CCIS for two

quarters and devised a unique cataloging and cross-referencing system. Her students had an outstanding training experience in the initial cataloging of these materials and the information in CCIS was made easily accessible to anyone wanting to use it. During the first year of operation, access to CCIS materials depended on the knowledge of the individual proctors. Since the number of materials was constantly growing and the staff was changing from quarter to quarter, it was increasingly difficult for each proctor to have knowledge of all materials. The new system was designed to shoulder that responsibility for them and enable CCIS to be a truly self-help program.

In order for students to be able to use the materials in the library, a system had to be devised that would incorporate two basically different types of materials in a systematic manner. Figure 1 visually depicts this sytem.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The two basic types of materials were (1) career planning information and (2) occupational information. The former included all materials not related to a specific career, e.g., books containing information about career planning or financial aid, and guides to various majors or colleges. These were classified according to the Dewey Decimal Classification system. The latter included books, audio-and video tapes, pamphlets, and briefs containing job descriptions, occupational outlook information, salary ranges, etc. A classification

system based on the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) was developed to classify these materials. The DOT numbers for each occupation were assigned to each piece of material about that occupation. Briefs, pamphlets, brochures, books, and tapes were placed in the files and on the bookshelves according to these numbers.

It should be noted that the self-directed component of CCIS includes the Self-Directed Search (SDS) (Holland, 1970) and that students are directed to the career information library, files, etc. immediately after completing the SDS A logical method of filing material in CCIS therefore, would, be according to Holland's three-letter codes. This method was considered and rejected for two reasons. First, many students look for information in CCIS who have not taken the SDS and/or who already have a commitment to their chosen field. Using the SDS codes would require these students to make an additional conversion for the many occupations not listed in the Occupations Finder, i.e. from job title to DOT number to SDS code, rather than from job title to DOT number. While the students would thereby be exposed to information about careers with similiar environments, the authors' experience has shown that students looking for specific information prefer the most direct method of locating information. This decision has been supported by the increased number of students who now come to CCIS looking only for information.

The second, and primary, reason for using the DOT system for filing materials is ease of cataloging. CCIS uses many commercially prepared materials, including those from the U.S. Government Printing Office.

Almost all occupational information from these sources has DOT numbers printed on it. Using the DOT system eliminates the time consuming classifying process for these materials.

The Process

Books, audio-visual materials and occupational file folders in the CCIS centers are cataloged (see Figure 1). This is the process of making an item accessible through author, title, and subject (Wynar, 1972) plus describing the material by publisher, place of publication, date of publication, pagination, and illustrative information. Then the item is classified, which is the assigning of a DDC or DOT number and a cutter number. A cutter number is a number unique to each individual item for books, audio-and video-tapes, and unique to each occupation for filed occupational information.

With books, audio- and video-tapes the cutter number serves the purpose of giving each item a unique number that will distinquish it from other materials in the same classification number. In this way no two items will have the same number. The cutter number comes from the first letter of the author's last name or from the first letter of the title of the material; whether author or title is used depends on how the item was entered on the catalog card. The numbers following the chosen letter come from a cutter table which is in standard use in many libraries.

The cutter number for vertical file material has a different function. Because several occupations sometimes have the same DOT number, cutter numbers are used to separate one occupation from another. The cutter number is chosen from the first letter of

the occupation and from the cutter table.

After the assigning of appropriate numbers a check of materials to be filed must be made to see if there is an existing file with the same classification number. If not, one must be made.

From here, the process is the same for all materials. The classification number is written on the material. An attempt is made to place the number in the same location on all material to faciliate finding the number. The material is then shelved or filed in the centers with a temporary card identifying the material placed in the appropriate catalogs. A worksheet with full cataloging and classification information goes to the typist so that one master card is made for each item. Next, the master is duplicated so that enough cards are made for each catalog. The final step is the filing of the cards in the catalogs.

Access to materials on the shelves and in the vertical files is through both cataloging systems. The instructions given to students for finding information in CCIS are listed below:

Occupational Information (DOT Classication)

1. Locate the occupation in card catalog number 1(the DOT Index). The cards are filed alphabetically.
2. Write down the DOT number which is located to the right of the occupational title.
3. Books, tapes, and file folders may be found by looking up this number in card catalog number 2 (the DOT Subject Catalog).
4. (You may be able to locate additional information about more general or more specific occupations by looking under the first two or three digits of the DOT number in card catalog number 2).

5. The number in the left-hand corner of each card in card catalog number 2 is the "locator number": Books, tapes and files are located on the shelves or in the lateral files according to this number.

Curricular and Career Planning Information (DDC Classification)

1. Look up the subject you wish to explore in the alphabetical listing of card catalog number 3 (the DDC Subject Catalog).
2. Read the "locator number" from the upper left hand corner of the card.
3. Locate the books found in numerical order on the CCIS library shelves.

Major improvements of this system over a (traditional) DOT filing system are the cross-referencing and access aspects. Briefs, pamphlets, tapes, book chapters, and articles on a specific career are pinpointed in the subject catalog and listed under all occupations to which it could possibly have reference. For example, a card directing the student to the PreLaw Handbook is found under "11", Occupations in Law and Jurisprudence; 110.108", Lawyers; and "111.108", Judges. The student can find information related to his/her interest from many different points in the subject catalog and is, therefore, less likely to miss information by failing to know a precise job title. Access is also provided to information not usually accessable through card catalog. Books which deal with several different topics or occupations are listed under each separate topic or occupation.

Problems and Implications

Using the Dictionary of Occupational Titles poses problems for both the cataloger and the users. The most crucial one is that new occupations are not listed. This necessitates a "best guess" by the librarian to include them in an occupational area as closely related as possible. For instance, information about environmental careers could fit in many different places and there is an element of chance in whether the librarian will choose to put the material in the same place the student will look. It is also difficult for students to generate job titles in some of the new areas. Another difficulty is that different levels of a field may be split among several numbers in the DOT. An example of this is that Recreation supervisor is listed under 187.118 and Recreation leader under 195.228. This causes a problem for someone who wants to know about all positions available in the recreation field. He or she will have to keep referring to the DOT index to locate the numbers of related occupations and different occupational levels.

Also, there is too fine a discrimination betweem some occupations for the information available. In most cases there would be no need to separate Athletic coach (education) in 099.228 from Instructor, physical education (education) in 153.228.

Despite the problems, this classification system has significantly improved the access to materials in CCIS and is regarded as the best system to be used in this situation, with this population. By making the use of materials less dependent on the proctors, it has enabled the proctors to spend more time working with individual students instead of looking for information.

Anyone considering developing a cataloging system such as this should be ready to use substantial resources in the project. The CCIS system was conceptualized by a faculty member in library science and three of her advanced graduate students who worked for two quarters on the project. Forty other graduate students in library science spent over five hours each cataloging materials in CCIS.

The system is currently maintained by a half-time professional librarian (a graduate assistant) and a third-time student assistant. A large amount of clerical assistance is required in typing and xeroxing cards and in filing cards and materials. During the developmental stage of a project, this would probably require a full-time person or the equivalent.

Some of the needs encountered in developing the system included writing a cataloging procedures and typing manual, arranging for duplicating of cards (a regular Xerox machine does not take library stock), purchasing card catalogs and other library equipment, and stockpiling new materials as they came in to avoid their getting lost in, or confounding, the system.

This system was created through cooperation between a student service unit and an academic department. The purpose was to enable college students to have easy access to educational/vocational information needed for career planning purposes. Although there are some shortcomings in the system and many difficulties were encountered in its development, it has successfully accomplished its purpose, and frees the CCIS proctors from the burden or knowing about all the materials available, enabling them to work more personally with students. We conclude that it was well worth the effort and expense.

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FIGURE 1 Library Procedures